



Comhairle Contae an Chláir
Clare County Council

Tuarascáil Mhíosúil ón Phríomhfheidhmeannach Monthly Management Report

A chairde,

January saw the launch of the Government's "Action Plan for Rural Ireland". The national plan sets out five pillars aimed at developing rural communities which is a very significant opportunity for rural development in Clare.

In discussions with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs, the importance of a strong Clare multi-Department response to the Action Plan was welcomed. Clare County Council is establishing a Rural Development Forum with a view to preparing a Rural Development Strategy for County Clare. The Council's approach will be led by the Rural Development Directorate.

Local community, business and farming groups as well as State and Development Agencies interested in being nominated as potential members of the Clare Rural Development Forum are being invited to attend the inaugural meeting in the Ennis Civic Room of the Buttermarket Building, Waterpark campus, Ennis, on 15 February 2017. The Local Authority and its members will also be represented on the new Forum.

In the area of Economic Development and Planning, the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 became effective from January 25th 2017 in accordance with legislation. The plan replaces the existing Clare County Development Plan, the Kilrush Town & Environs Development Plan and the Ennis & Environs Development Plan. Works are also progressing in Clarecastle, Kilkee, Scarriff and Shannon under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

In the area of Physical Development, Clare received an allocation of €14.8 million for Regional & Local Roads, representing a €750,000 increase on the figure received last year. Significant progress was also made in progressing coastal defence strengthening and remediation projects.

Le meas,

Pat Dowling

**Chief Executive
Clare County Council**

Contents

Chief Executive's Report - pg.1

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Planning & Enterprise Dev.,
Employment & LEO - pg.2
Tourism - pg.3

FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

Corporate Services, Finance,
Human Resources – pg.3

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Action Plan,
Information Technology - pg.4
Lough Derg Blueway - pg.5

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Housing, Sports/Amenities - pg.6
Cultural Services - pg.7

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Roads & Capital Projects - pg.8,
Storm Damage - pg.9,
Water Services - pg.10,
Environment - pg.11,
Fire/Building, Public Light - pg.13

PLANNING & ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

January 2017 - Key Activities

- The Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 became effective from January 25th 2017 in accordance with legislation. The plan replaces the existing Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017, the Kilrush Town & Environs Development Plan 2014-2020 and the Ennis & Environs Development Plan 2008-2014. The Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 includes settlement plans and zonings for the settlements of the County and accordingly the existing West Clare Local Area Plan 2012-2018, South Clare Local Area Plan 2012-2018, North Clare Local Area Plan 2011-2017 and East Clare Local Area Plan 2011-2017 were deemed to be revoked with effect from 21st January 2017.
- A draft Ministerial Direction issued on 24th January on the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023, specifically in relation to the zoning of TOU7 at Ardcloney, Killaloe. Submissions may be made between 31st January and 13th February 2017 inclusive on the draft Ministerial Direction.
- 60 planning applications and 30 pre-planning applications were received by Clare County Council up to end of January.
- Works are progressing in Clarecastle, Kilkee, Scarriff and Shannon under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2016.
- Kilkee – Tenders for Artistic Sculptures were advertised in January for both Percy French Green and Carrigaholt Roundabout. A public information session on the redesign of the public realm will take place on 8th February in Sweeney Memorial Library, Kilkee.
- Shannon - design of Slí na Mara is progressing in consultation with Dúchas na Sionna.

- An informal information session was held in Shannon on 12th January to present the latest plans for the proposed new Shannon Town Park. The €910,000 project will see the enhancement and incorporation of the existing town park woodland and the adjacent Rineanna Park into a flagship town park for the people of Shannon. Once feedback on the emerging proposals has been obtained, it is intended to progress the scheme through the statutory Part 8 process, with a view to commencing works on site by late-Summer 2017.
- Enforcement – 9 complaints were received, 6 warning letters were issued, 5 Enforcement Notices were served and 8 files were closed during the month of January.
- The Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs announced two national conservation grant schemes on 31st January. €824,000 is being allocated nationally under the Structures at Risk Fund 2017 while Clare County Council has been allocated €50,000 under the Built Heritage Investment Scheme 2017. Full details of both grants schemes are available on www.clarecoco.ie. Closing date for receipt of applications for both grant schemes is 28th February 2017.



EMPLOYMENT & LOCAL ENTERPRISE OFFICE

- The regional judging for the IBYE competition took place on 19th January and the awards ceremony was held in the Bunratty Castle Hotel on 23rd January 2017.

The awards were presented by Mr Pat Breen, Minister for Employment and Small Business. This year there were 12 finalists from the counties of Clare, Tipperary, Limerick and Kerry.

The awards night was well attended and the winners were as follows:

- Best Idea: Damian Mason Flexibod Ltd., Co. Clare
- Best Start Up: Derek Counihan, Harpoon, Kerry
- Best Established: Adrian Fleming, Accuvio, Limerick

The winners will go on to represent the region at the national final on 5th March 2017.



Damien Mason (FlexiBod) with his wife Elizabeth and Minister Pat Breen

- This month's training programmes included:
 - Complete Digital Marketing
 - Start Your Own Business
 - How to pitch your business
- Showcase Exhibition took place in the RDS, Dublin from 21st – 25th January 2017. LEO Clare sponsored 3 client companies to attend this exhibition. This exhibition is aimed at craft/ design businesses and attracts international buyers.

TOURISM

January 2017 - Key Activities

- Visitor numbers at the Cliffs of Moher exceeded 1.4 million for 2016.



- The Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience was named Ireland's top visitor attraction in a poll of readers of The Irish Independent.
- Coordination group meetings commenced for overall management of Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann 2017 with Clare County Council significantly inputting to the overall management and operation of the festival.



Pictured at the Irish Tourism Industry Awards in Dublin

- Clare attractions were shortlisted in different categories in the 2017 Irish Tourism Industry Awards. Lough Derg Marketing initiative named 'Best Local Authority Tourism Initiative'
- The election process for area representatives on Clare Tourism is underway with area elections scheduled for mid-February.
- International conference of global geoparks is being organised for Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark in March 2017.

FINANCE & SUPPORT SERVICES

PROCUREMENT

The following opportunities were advertised on eTenders during January 2017.

CONTRACT ADVERTISED	CLOSING DATE
Implementation of Clare Comhairle na nÓg Programme	10th February 2017
Sandwich Supplier – Cliffs of Moher	10th February 2017
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Supplier – Cliffs of Moher	10th February 2017
Shannon Grass Cutting Contract	10th February 2017
Electrical Services Framework	17th February 2017
Ennis Grass Cutting Contract	17th February 2017
Bird Usage Survey for the Shannon-Fergus Estuary	17th February 2017
Plumbing Services Framework	24th February 2017

REGISTER OF ELECTORS

The new Register of Electors 2017/2018 will be published on 1st February 2017 and will be effective from 15th February 2017 for the duration of one year. There is practically no change in the number of voters on the register in each of the various categories of voter. For those who wish to know if they are on the register, they should check the website www.checktheregister.ie.

COMMUNICATIONS

In recent months, Clare County Council has boosted its social media presence and Council messages are now reaching a wide audience. Clare County Council now has 2,244 followers on Twitter and 3,443 followers on Facebook. In the last month, the Council has commenced using Instagram and presently has 80 followers. It is intended to continue to improve the use of these social media platforms.

JOINT POLICING COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Joint Policing Committee will be held at 11.15 am on 13th February 2017 in the Council Chamber in Áras Contae and Chláir.

MILESTONE 4 PROJECT

The council is currently engaged in work to prepare for the installation of upgraded business management software. The software is called Milestone 4 and is an upgrade of the software previously referred to as Agresso. There is a project team in place within the council which is dealing the necessary preparatory work. The system is being implemented in most local authorities in the country, with 14 authorities already live with the system. It is scheduled to go live in Clare in June this year. As the Agresso system is used through out the council the new system will bring change in operational processes to all sections of the council. The main impact will be in the Purchase to Pay cycle, together with improvements in user interfaces through use of the web to interact with the system in most cases.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The new year began with 7 competitions being advertised for vacancies across the organization.

14 Training Courses were held in January with 134 participants. Courses included the Certificate in Local Government Studies, Manual Handling, Customer Care, AutoCAD and SafePass.

Clare County Council actively supports the 'Junior Achievement Awards' and 7 staff participated in the training in January with a view to passing on an understanding of our organisational values and objectives to the younger members of the community through the National Schools system.

Government's National "Action Plan for Rural Development"



Taoiseach Enda Kenny and Rural Minister Heather Humphreys at the launch of the Action Plan for Rural Development in Longford

The Taoiseach launched the Government's National "Action Plan for Rural Development" on 23rd January 2017. This is an Inter-Departmental approach and a priority of the Programme for Government. It contains a series of actions aimed at revitalising rural areas. Essentially it is a framework which brings together a number of different programmes into a coordinated approach. It sets out five pillars aimed at developing rural communities including:

- supporting sustainable communities;
- supporting enterprise and employment;
- fostering culture and creativity;
- maximising potential for tourism & recreation;
- improving infrastructure and connectivity.

Further details on this Government strategy and plans for the Clare Rural Development Forum are included under 'Headed Items' in the February 2017 Clare County Council Meeting.



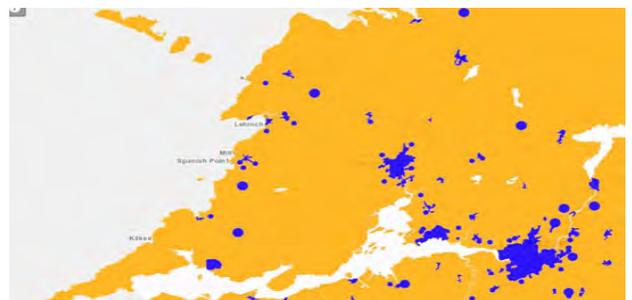
Expression of Interest for LEADER funding

A funding application under the LEADER Programme was submitted for the establishment of a Strategic Business Access Hub in Kilrush. The main aim of the project is to provide high-speed broadband and digital services for small to medium sized enterprises in West Clare. This project will be located on the first floor of Kilrush Town Hall. Following the completion of this pilot and related key learning, it is proposed to develop similar facilities in each Municipal District.



Clare Digital Strategy

Following on the assignment of a Broadband and Digital Officer for Clare County Council, the Rural Development Directorate is in the process of tendering for the appointment of a consultant to prepare a Digital Strategy for County Clare. Clare County Council wishes to build on the competitive advantage afforded to Clare by its location and accessibility to High Speed Communications Networks - such as that being developed under the National Broadband Plan - through the development and implementation of a Digital Strategy. This strategy would identify the role that broadband can play in Clare's future economic and social development and also the role the Local Authorities can play to facilitate same. The Digital Strategy will comprise a number of short, medium and long term objectives. These will be implemented over the lifetime of the strategy (5 years).



High Speed Broadband coverage map for Clare

Clare County Council is focused on enhancing the digital economy within the County. Promoting the digital agenda through a dynamic workforce and enhanced infrastructure will provide Clare with a significant competitive advantage and help secure sustainability and prosperity into the future.

Lough Derg Blueway

The implementation of the Lough Derg Blueway initiative which attracted REDZ funding of €200,000 has commenced. This marketing and promotion project will result in the promotion of the Lough Derg Canoe Trail and the wider Lough Derg area

As the lead applicant, Clare County Council has secured REDZ (Rural Economic Development Zone) funding to the sum of €200,000 from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. This project was prioritised by the Council's CEDRA Committee and approved by full Council. The project will support the expansion of the Lough Derg Canoe Trail into Blueway status where specific trails are marketed and promoted as part of the Lough Derg Blueway.

The Rural Development Directorate and Waterways Ireland briefed the Elected Members of Killaloe Municipal District on 2nd February 2017 on what a completed Blueway initiative entails. Waterways Ireland has previous experience in similar projects with the Upper Shannon and the Shannon Erne Blueway.

Clare County Council's Rural Development Directorate has partnered with the Lough Derg Marketing Group, Tipperary County Council and Waterways Ireland for this flagship project in order to ensure optimum collaboration and implementation. Other Directorates of Clare County Council will also input, particularly the Tourism unit within Economic Development Directorate.



This REDZ Lough Derg Blueway project is managed by a Steering Committee comprising of the Lough Derg Marketing Group, Clare County Council, Tipperary County Council and Waterways Ireland. The project vision is to further expand the canoe trail into a Blueway, gaining national recognition from the National Trails Office and Canoeing Ireland.

The project aims to build on the existing tourism and recreational infrastructure as well as improve economic activity surrounding the Blueway on Lough Derg, by working with communities in the towns and villages in its hinterland. In essence, the concept of a REDZ involves supporting communities of the Scarriff and Nenagh REDZ areas to avail of opportunities to help themselves and their local areas.

Lough Derg Canoe Trail



As a separate project from the 'Lough Derg Blueway', a very significant project known as the Lough Derg Canoe Trail has recently seen canoe facilities and services blocks installed in Killaloe, Ballycuggeran, Scarriff, Mountshannon and Dromaan harbours. This project was an initiative of the Lough Derg Marketing Group and was funded

under the Lough Derg Stimulus Fund. Waterways Ireland led the design and development of the project in partnership with Clare County Council, Galway County Council and Tipperary County Council. The Rural Development and Physical Development Directorates (area office) are working closely on this project in conjunction with the Tourism unit of the Economic Development Directorate.

Derelict Sites

The Rural Development Directorate is responsible for addressing Derelict Sites across the county. In a cross-directorate approach with the Social Development Directorate, we are working together to convert derelict properties into social housing units where opportunities arise as feasible projects. For example a derelict property in Ennis damaged by fire, which became vested in the Council under the derelict sites CPO (Compulsory Purchase Order) process, has now transferred as Council housing stock.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

(Housing, Sport & Amenities and Cultural Services)

HOUSING

2017 started apace with Directorate staff setting out their targets and objectives for the year ahead as well as reviewing the year just gone. A special feature of the month was the arrival of 8 Syrian Families to Ennistymon on January 24th. The families are receiving the ongoing support of the Council, the Department of Justice, the HSE, the DSP and other stakeholders as required and have been made feel very welcome by the local community.

While we await the construction of new units, during 2017 we are again dependent on the acquisition of suitable properties. While the market is increasing, there is still value to be obtained in acquisitions. In January, the housing team has viewed over 20 dwellings, contracts have been signed for 6 no. and sales closed in respect of 5 no. properties. Offers have been made on a further 6 properties and we will continue to source and acquire as many suitable properties as we can, particularly in high demand areas, to help alleviate the ongoing demands that exist for social housing in Clare.



In terms of Rental and Leasing, there are 1,004 HAP tenancies in Clare since the introduction of the new H.A.P. (Housing Assistance Scheme) in June 2015. The figures for January 2017 include one new RAS tenancy, no transfers and four voluntary housing RAS tenancies. In 2017, the Council has entered agreements for 2 short term leases while another 2 long term leases and 14 leases have been arranged with Approved Housing Bodies. To date there are 112 active short term leases, 85 active long term leases and 77 voluntary leases with Approved Housing Bodies.

Cluid Housing Association has allocated tenancies to 7 new 3-bed houses in Ennistymon. The houses were purchased by Cluid using CALF finance and are made available to Clare County Council for 30 years. The Council nominates applicants from its housing list for the duration of the agreement. Inis Housing Association has allocated tenancies to 6 new 1 and 2 bed houses in Riverside Village, Kilrush. These are leased by Inis from the developers and made available to Clare County Council for 20 years. Under these arrangements the Housing Associations manage the tenants and properties. A number of similar projects are coming into operation in the coming months.

The number of presentations at our Homelessness Unit up to 27th January 2017 was 28 with the Hostel at Laurel Lodge fully occupied (13 beds) throughout the month. The number in emergency accommodation (B&B) as of 27th January 2017 was 18 Adults with 18 Dependents. The Council is continuing to work with agencies to provide accommodation for homeless persons and a number of specific acquisitions are near completion. Progress is being made on the Homeless Action Team Office which is proposed to open in late March 2017 and will greatly enhance the service in this regard by bringing together the various agencies that have a role to play.

The Refurbishment and Maintenance works being carried out are as follows:

- No. of voids/casual vacancies at 1st January, 2017: 38 (this figure does not include properties which have become vacant after 1st January nor does it include acquisitions and long-term voids).
- Period vacant (average time vacant): 178 days
- No. of voids/vacant houses returned to stock after refurbishment during January, 2017: 10 returned to stock during month of January, 2017, with 26 houses undergoing refurbishment works during the month.
- No. of Maintenance calls in January, 2017: 298 calls logged on iHouse during month of January, 2017.

In the area of Capital Project Delivery, the Council met with the Department Advisors in January in relation to schemes approved and pending for County Clare. Assessment of the tenders for a design team for the housing proposed in Clonlara is now complete and consultants are due to be notified and appointed in coming weeks. The Feakle scheme is also approved to proceed and the Council will be making arrangements to meet with local groups for consultation following contract signing and design team appointment which is currently in progress. The Council also discussed the potential for the housing schemes in Quilty (approved for 10 units) to increase to 18 units and an application for this will be submitted by Clare County Council in February. Subject to Department approval, this scheme will then be submitted for a new Part VIII taking into account design and building standards changes since the original Part VIII was granted in 2008.



SPORT & AMENITIES

This year's annual Irish International Christmas Tree Throwing Championship was held on Sunday 8th January, 2017. It was our best attendance to date with 220 competitors. Once again this event generated a phenomenal amount of publicity for the Town, County, Environmental Awareness and this year's chosen charity. The event was covered by Clare FM on three occasions, Newstalk Radio, Today FM, all national, local and regional newspapers. The highlight of which was the front page centre photograph in the Irish Examiner. A position, if we had purchased, would have cost in the region of €10k. With this fantastic support the Council raised almost €486.00 for Mid West Rape Crisis Centre.

January also saw the first race of the 'Clare 17 Series' which was hosted in Lees Road last weekend. This is a series of races that develop from a 5km up to and including a 10mile run. The series moves around the county from Lees Rd, Quilty, Ennis and Kilnaboy. Sunday's 5km race saw a huge turnout of over 800 competitors. This is the only series of its kind in the country and we are delighted to be a part of such a successful initiative.

CULTURAL SERVICES

– LIBRARY, ARTS, MUSEUM, ARCHIVES

Clare County Library

- End of year returns for stock issued and visits to branches is up on 2015, with issues up 2% and membership up by 11%.



Scariff Public Library

- A book club collection, offering 10 copies of each title, was established to service the many book clubs who are library-based or use the library to source books.
- A monthly library lending service operates at Kilmaley Daycare Centre. Staff and residents were delighted to welcome the service in January. Favourite authors are selected from the library display stand and advice is given on new and alternative reads for the regular book borrowers there.
- Events this month included movie screenings (1 Adult / 1 Teenage) in Killaloe and Scariff libraries, computer classes in collaboration with volunteers from Friends Ireland at Ennis and Shannon libraries, and two children's craft sessions in Kilrush and Miltown Malbay libraries.
- The launch of the 2017 programme of the Ennis Book Club Festival was held in Ennis library in January. The launch was performed by Cllr. Ann Norton, Mayor of Ennis, and musical entertainment was provided by Etain McCooey. A reading by author Lisa McInerney, along with performances by Clare Youth Theatre, set the tone of what to expect at this year's festival.



EBCF Artistic Director, Paul Perry

- Story time sessions for children and book club meetings continued as usual in branches, as did the Clare FM Radio monthly library Book Club session.

CLARE MUSEUM

- Activities this month revolved around setting up three new educational workshops for launch in the early spring, cataloguing the collection and working on the museum standards programme for Ireland.

The top floor was closed during the last week of January while maintenance work was carried out on the roof insulation.

CLARE ARTS OFFICE

- The 'From Edge to Edge' exhibition finished in glór in January. Almost 400 people came to specifically see the exhibition, which also saw groups visit from VTOS and St. Joseph's Hospital, Ennis. 3 schools workshops were also held.
- Residencies have been awarded by the Arts Office to 30 disability groups / organisations throughout the county who will work with artists, musicians, actors and dancers over the coming year.
- Our traditional singers in residence continued with the fortnightly singing circle for young people in glór and started workshops in 6 new schools, Gaelscoileanna in Kilrush and Shannon, Ennistymon CBS Secondary School, Boston NS, Fanore NS and Annagh NS. A joint initiative with the County Museum was piloted where a volunteer from the Museum gave a guided tour of the Museum accompanied by the singers singing songs on the theme of emigration.
- An exhibition by Wolf Lorien was held in Cultúrlann Sweeney and the January Film Club showed Viva, the Oscar nominated film written by Ennis man, Mark O'Halloran



Cultúrlann Sweeney Kilkee

ROADWORKS PROGRAMME & OPERATIONS

- Implementation of the 2016 Non National Roadworks Programme reached a conclusion with the exception of some contracted work in the Ennis Area which is ongoing and had been put on hold during 2016 to facilitate timing of the Fleadh in August – the main one being the roundabout and drainage works development at Cappahard which is now almost completed and should be closed out by February 16th.
- With regard to National Routes, a very significant county-wide overlay contract is continuing – 2 out of 3 of the main components have been completed since late last year and the one outstanding component (a very substantial 6km contract on the N67 near New Quay) is ongoing on site and should be completed by Mid-February. A fourth scheme – at Bealaha on the N67 – which was allocated funding in 2016 will also proceed shortly in the form of a sub-contract in association with an Irish Water mains rehabilitation project. In addition, pedestrian facilities for Kilrush Road, Ennis which had been approved in mid 2016 will go ahead shortly – timing of implementation of these works had also been affected by the Fleadh. The funding for all of these works remains in place.
- Both TII and the Department of Transport, Tourism and

Sport have confirmed their beginning of year schedule of grants for 2017. The TII total allocation is €540,721 which is much less than has been confirmed traditionally at this time of year – this arises as a result of an evolving change of approach by TII who now tend to confirm further allocations through the course of the year pending completion of advance preparation and design in relation to overlay proposals, low cost safety schemes and so on.

- The total DTTaS allocation for 2017 is €14,803,865 – the key points of which include:
 1. Special allocation of €1,000,000 towards major remediation of Latoon Bridge
 2. An allocation of €500,000 to facilitate initiation of land acquisition stage (on foot of approved CPO) in relation to the Killaloe By-Pass
 3. An increase of almost €750,000 in the Restoration Improvement grant
 4. Facilitation of CIS in the same manner as recent years
 5. Over, the total increase over 2016 is just over €1.75 million or 13.5%.
- The Roadworks Programme for 2017 is being prepared at present and, when completed, it will be incorporated in the 2017 SMDW Report for consideration at all 4 MD meetings scheduled for March.

CAPITAL PROJECTS

The following is the up-to-date position in relation to a no. of strategic projects which are at various stages of development.

- Killaloe By-Pass – The protracted Judicial Review and subsequent appeals concluded in November, 2016 with confirmation of final approval for the project. Notices to Treat were served at the end of August and the submissions received in response to same are being examined at present. An allocation of €500,000 is included in the 2017 Schedule of Road Grants to facilitate initiation of land acquisition of foot of the approved project CPO.
- Limerick Northern Distributor Road (Phase 2) – Preliminary Design work is ongoing. As Councillors are aware, the formal Development Plan variation pertaining to the Clare section of the project was passed in July, 2015, and shortly thereafter, the equivalent proposed variation of the Limerick County Development Plan was defeated by Limerick Councillors. Limerick City and County Council has recently been reconsidering its position on the matter and arising from same, a new variation process is likely to get underway shortly in relation to the same route corridor as was considered previously but with the benefit of enhanced provision for interaction with the strategic route network at the Limerick end of the corridor to deal with ongoing capacity difficulties including in the vicinity of the junction with the M7 motorway.
- Doolin Pier and Village Masterplan – The Doolin Pier construction project was completed in mid-June of 2015 and the level of activity in terms of ferry operations has increased significantly over the past 2 tourist seasons as a result of the additional flexibility and opportunity afforded by the development. Consultants are presently working towards submission of formal planning proposals in relation to the development of a new accommodation building, parking and other ancillary facilities and the develop-

ment of traffic management and car and coach parking facilities in the vicinity of Fisher Street. An update from the consultants is expected later this month.

- Blakes Corner – During the second half of 2016, separate determinations from TII and An Bord Pleanála confirmed that a 2 stage approach to approval to the project would not be acceptable and that the appropriate Planning Process to deal with it would be the Part VIII procedure. The steering group is presently considering options based on the current position as outlined above and liaison is continuing with TII.
- N85 Kilnamona Realignment Scheme: Preliminary Design work is reaching a conclusion and Ennis MD Councillors are to be briefed in early March regarding the preferred route proposal.
- Ennis South Flood Relief Scheme – The project has been approved, preparation of tender documents is almost completed and the formal tender process is about to commence.
- Cappahard Roundabout and Drainage Works, Ennis: The contract is almost completed and the new roundabout will be fully operational imminently.
- West Clare Railway Greenway – Construction work is completed on the 3km section from Ennis Town Centre to Lees Road Sports and Amenity Park. Liaison is continuing with affected landowners to the North of this section.
- Active Travel Towns – The key Active Travel projects which were approved in 2016 and went to construction were :
 - Clareabbey to Ballymaley
 - Quin rd
 - Tulla rd to Gort rd
 Contract works are substantially completed in relation to all 3 components and the facilities are operational.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

STORM DAMAGE (Jan/Feb 2014)

- Cumulative expenditure to end of 2016 closed out at €13 million. Contract works which are presently ongoing will result in this accumulating to approximately €15.5 million over the next 2 to 3 months.
- The sum remaining to be spent in relation to the coastal damage repair programme is €5.5 million. The programme pertaining to same should be substantially completed during the second quarter of 2017 (with the exception of Lahinch) pending successful passage through outstanding planning process's and other factors outside our control.
- Separately, the strategy pertaining to coastal strengthening proposals is ongoing – as per details set out in the above table. The cost of Feasibility Studies and other ancillary outlay is being separately funded by the Office of Public Works and is not part of the sums referred to under the previous 2 bullet points.

The following table sets out the current position in relation to Strengthening and significant Remediation projects:

PROJECT	CURRENT SITUATION
Cloughaninchy	A further amended proposal (third proposal) has been prepared in draft format by the consultants for consideration – less comprehensive and less costly than the original (first proposal) which had been rejected by the OPW but with a much improved Benefit Cost Ratio. Consultation with the local community re same is ongoing before deciding on whether to forward the proposal to the OPW.
New Quay/Aughinish	Draft Feasibility Study submitted by consultants – being examined.
Doolin	Feasibility Study nearing completion
Liscannor Bay: Clehane, Adjacent to Pitch & Putt, Liscannor	Feasibility Study completed and submitted to Clare Co Council – having been amended to reflect responses to queries raised by the Council.
Lahinch Central (Prom Area)	Contract ongoing – now approximately 50% completed - with a view to completion in advance of 2017 tourist season.
Lahinch South	Consultants design work ongoing. Formal planning process (Part VIII) ongoing also – due to conclude in March.
Whitestrans (Milltown Malbay), Spanish Point, Quilty	Feasibility Study completed.
Ross Bay	Strengthening requirements – application to appoint consultant to carry out Feasibility Study still under consideration by the OPW.
Kilbaha	Feasibility Study overdue – expected shortly.
Kilcredaun	Contract completed.
Atlantic Coastline/IFA	Proceeding with works in Farrihy and Doonmore – contracts awarded and works underway at both locations. Significant environmental sensitivities elsewhere which may result in works curtailment.
Estuary Coastline/IFA	Design work ongoing in relation to multiple locations. 3 work packages gone to tender – at Ballynacally, Burrane Lower and Carrownacalla South. Further works packages to be tendered.

STORM DAMAGE (Sept, Dec 2015 & Jan 2016)

The winter of 2015/16 was difficult in terms of the extent and intensity of rainfall which occurred over the period and during the course of the extreme events which occurred, the vulnerability of a number of locations to flooding was demonstrated along with ancillary consequences. Arising from same, the Council has been pursuing feasible solutions in a number of areas with a view to minimisation of risk in the event that extreme weather situations such as occurred in September and December, 2015 and January, 2016 occur again. Among the locations under consideration are Springfield, Milltown Malbay, Ballyvaughan and Murtyclough (near New Quay).

The up-to-date position in relation to each is as follows:

- Springfield, Clonlara: This is presently under review by the OPW following an appeal by the Council and local residents against the findings and conclusions of the CFRAMS study pertaining to the area. This review is being carried out with the benefit of significant additional information provided by the Council. The Council continues to liaise with the OPW and hosted a visit at Áras Contae an Chláir on February 6th with a view to having the review completed and a feasible engineered solution implemented on the ground as

soon as possible.

- Milltown Malbay: A hydrological assessment of the Northern part of the town, centred around Church Street was completed recently and proposes a solution which would involve upgrading of existing culvert and drainage infrastructure as well as extension of the down-gradient open channel system to facilitate efficient disposal of surface water to the Cleadagh River. A consultant is now to be appointed to facilitate preparation of a formal planning application, to be followed by application to the OPW for funding to implement the proposed solution.
- Ballyvaughan: A hydrological assessment in relation to the problems experienced in Ballyvaughan is almost completed and it should be possible to report to the Council in relation to its conclusions at the March monthly meeting.
- Murtyclough: The N67 was closed to traffic for 6 weeks in late 2015/early 2016 and the recommended solution, following a hydrological assessment, involves the provision of a pumping station to dispose of surplus flood water to Galway Bay. There are significant environmental designations and sensitivities in the area. A consultant is to be appointed imminently to prepare a formal planning application following which funding to facilitate implementation will be pursued.

WATER SERVICES

Water Services reform and other issues:

- No further outcomes are anticipated regarding WIOF (Water Industry Operating Framework) until the end of March 2017.
- Other transformation projects – including regional capital offices, national laboratory strategy, and planned maintenance – are being progressed but there have been no major developments on them during January.
- The 2017 ASP (Annual Service Plan) forwarded by Irish Water has already been outlined in the report for December 2016. During January the Council formally accepted the 2017 ASP, with written caveats on the likely difficulty in achieving targets in some Key Performance Indicators.

Water & Wastewater operational – key points

- Each local authority is assessed monthly by IW on its performance on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the Annual Service Plan. Clare Co Council's overall score for the last quarter of 2016, as notified to us at the January meeting with IW, stood at or very close to the highest in the IW Southern region (Munster + SE

Leinster). It remains to be seen if Clare's performance can be sustained throughout 2017, as the number of KPIs has increased and targets in many of them have become more challenging, without a corresponding increase in resource allocation by Irish Water.

The most significant individual operational items during the month were:

Water – The Boil Water Notice which was issued for Turlough Public Water Supply in July 2016 was lifted in January 2017 on the advice of the HSE, after completion of all works required by the EPA.

Wastewater – Design and procurement for the replacement pressure vessels at Victoria wastewater pumping station, Kilkee is well advanced and orders are in place for their manufacture. In addition Irish Water have also committed to replacing pipework and significant electrical improvements to the pumping station as part of this project. When complete it will represent a significant capital investment in the pumping station. Works are currently on programme for a March 2017 completion date. In the meantime the prohibition notice under the Bathing Water Regulations has been extended.

WATER SERVICES (Capital projects)

Irish Water has received, and will evaluate during February, tenders from consultant engineers for projects in the 2017-2021 Capital Investment Programme (CIP). Clare projects in this process are upgrade of Ennistymon and Newmarket wastewater treatment plants, and the next phase of upgrade of Shannon WWTP. The 2017-2021 CIP will also include continuation of wastewater treatment upgrades at Quin and Kilfenora. However it is not yet known if it will contain any works in addition to those named herein. Hereunder is a summary of any changes in status of significant capital projects since the December 2016 monthly report:

WATER PROJECTS	
Ennis water mains rehabilitation project phase 2	Work to rectify control issues on the ring main along the N85, approved by IW in addition to the main project which was practically completed last autumn, will commence shortly.
WASTEWATER PROJECTS	
Clonroadmore wastewater treatment plant (Ennis) upgrade	The construction stage and the first period of process proving have been completed. The second 14 days of process proving will commence on resolution of defect issues at Francis St & Tulla Rd Pumping Stations. These issues are not expected to be rectified until the middle of March 2017.
Shannon wastewater treatment plant upgrade phase 1 – inlet works	The project is approx. 95% complete and behind programme. Civil and mechanical-electrical construction elements are essentially completed. The process validation and the flow & load survey periods are due to commence mid February. The anticipated completion date is mid April 2017.
Shannon Town Sewer Network Survey	Surveys and cleaning of all pump stations will commence early 2017 in conjunction with a Flow, Load, Rainfall and Sampling contract. Ensen has been awarded this 4 month contract. This will feed into the Model build and verification. Project completion is Q3 2017.
Kilfenora WWTP upgrade	Design review report has been submitted and is under review by IW.
Quin WWTP upgrade	The design review report is currently being reviewed by IW Asset Strategy.
Flow Monitoring Project	Cully Automation have recently commenced a Flow Monitoring contract involving the installation of flow meters and instrumentation in 19 waste water treatment plants around the county. The project is expected to take 6 months to complete.

Rural Water: The amount drawn down from 2016 allocations by groups up to the deadline of 30 Nov. was just under €229,000, compared with the total of €380,100 which was available. The main reason for the shortfall in drawdown was the very late notification of allocations. At the request of the Council at its December meeting, the Department has been asked to carry over the remaining amount of just over €151,000 to the 2017 allocation.

Three further Clare GWSs were taken in charge by IW in December – Ballynagrannagh, Barefield; Monaskeagh, Clonlara; and Cloonfada, Killaloe. The application form and accompanying documents have been sent to a further 18 (eighteen) GWSs which had expressed an

interest in being taken in charge, with a view to have at least some of them transferring during 2018.

Although no formal taking in charge process has yet been agreed for group sewerage schemes, discussions are taking place with IW about 3 schemes built in recent years on the periphery of Ennis – Ballybeg, Loughville and Woodview.

Non-Domestic Metering: Discussions are continuing with IW on management of future meter reading. Training was given during December by IW in the system whereby IW will notify the Council of meter issues to be resolved.

ENVIRONMENT

Legislative compliance, RMCEI enforcement, inspection, prosecution, management

- On average over 500 inspections, warning notices, enforcement and advisory notices issue in accordance with the requirements of the EPA agreed Environmental Inspection Plan each month.

Waste - Enforcement, Regulation and Management

- Inspections were carried out on a continuing basis during January in accordance with the Environmental Inspection Plan (based on RMCEI criteria). Included were inspections of Waste Permit and Collection Permit compliances, enforcement of unauthorised End-of-Life Vehicle (ELV) facilities and inspections of self-complying producers and businesses. These inspections focused on the WEEE, tyres and packaging regulations, etc. as well as ongoing main Waste Management Act and Litter Acts enforcement.



- Work continued in policing and prosecution of illegal waste activity. CCTV equipment is in place, working in conjunction with Tidy Towns committees. The equipment will be relocated as required. The Enforcement team also purchased a further 4 mobile cameras for covert surveillance at known litter problem points. These also will be relocated as required by operational needs.
- Three further court cases are pending relating to illegal waste activities in the county, 18 litter fines were issued and 2 Section 18 notices issued to householders in January. An out-of-hours (weekend) investigation of a complaint took place – the complaint was conveyed to us by the EPA and concerned commercial burning of waste by a company in Clare. This was successfully closed out.
- To promote compliance with the Presentation of Waste By-Laws, layout proposals for commercial bin enclosures around Ennis have been developed and preliminary costing has been carried out. These plans are advancing with the various stakeholders who include the Conservation Officer, Municipal District, Councillors, local businesses and other relevant parties. It is intended to carry out similar work throughout the county as circumstances require.

Water Scientific Services and Laboratory

- Further to achieving the objectives of the Water

Framework Directive over this next river basin cycle, an ecological consultant has been requested to carry out monitoring on a number of water bodies in January 2017. The purpose of this monitoring is to narrow the focus for subsequent site investigations by Council staff, so optimising use of in-house resources.

- The Water Framework Directive (WFD) Lakes Sampling tenders were received in January and a contractor has been awarded through Procurement. Currently the process is in the standstill period after which sampling will proceed as per the requirements of the WFD lakes programme due to begin in February.
- The EPA Risk Rating Assessment Tool for Section 4 Water Pollution Licences was applied to all S4 Licences in January. This informs the monitoring and audit programme for S4 Licences for the year ahead. The Risk Rating Assessment Tool looks at licence compliance and informs the appropriate frequency of monitoring that is to be carried out by Clare County Council and selects Section 4 Licences that are required to be audited. Administration staff are also working on contacting S4 Licence holders for outstanding licence fees for the last 2/3 years.
- Pollution complaints handling has continued in January with recording, investigating and reporting with appropriate actions carried out in accordance with RMCEI criteria.
- Environment continues to provide Scientific Environmental reports to the Planning Authority which adhere to planning deadline requirements.
- 51 Domestic Waste Water Treatment System (Septic Tank) inspections have been completed for 2016, which exceeds the county annual EPA requirement of 49 inspections. The county pass rate was 61% (31 out of 51) with Notices issued detailing compliance works to be carried out in relation to all non compliant systems.
- The laboratory team is liaising with Irish Water (as part of the SLA) to finalise sampling plans for public water supplies and waste water for 2017. Monitoring data/inspections data for 2016 was sent to the EPA via Edenmds (environmental data exchange network) in January.
- Bathing Water Regulations - A prohibition Notice on Bathing was issued on 21 December 2016 in relation to Kilkee, on the instruction of the HSE and in consultation with Irish Water, following the failure of a storm surge vessel at the Irish Water pump station in Kilkee. This was extended in January, for a further 2 months.

Capital Projects

- The planning process for the new public toilets in Lahinch and Spanish Point is ongoing. Detail design for both sites is nearing completion with tender documentation due to be completed in early February. Design proposals for the public toilets in Kilkee are in the process of being developed in-house.
- A draft report in relation to the diving boards at Newfoundout, Kilkee, has been received from the Design Consultants and is being reviewed.

ENVIRONMENT (cont'd)

Education and Awareness

- Green Schools visits for Green Flag assessments have commenced. All school assessment reports and applications for renewal flags to be submitted to An Taisce by the 24th March. Four new schools have applied for the first Flag on litter and waste which includes two secondary schools and sixty five schools are applying for renewal flags. 133 schools are now registered in Clare for the Green Schools Programme.



- An application for a Green Parks Award for Vandeleur Walled Garden has been made to An Taisce.
- Work has commenced with supporting community groups around Clare as part of the Clean Coast Programme.
- 1,200 Christmas trees were collected at the county's recycling centres and Gardening Section during January. Shredded trees and quality chippings will be retained for amenity use.



- A social media campaign on illegal dumping in Co. Clare took place which promoted individual responsibility. Councillor Mary Howard, Gerry Murphy, community Warden and Karen Foley, environmental Awareness Officer were interviewed on Clare FM Morning Focus show during the month.



- Active promotion of the Environmental Awareness facebook <https://www.facebook.com/envawarenessclare/> and twitter page <https://twitter.com/EnvAwareClare> took place during January. The purpose of these social media accounts is to:
 - Promote awareness initiatives and events

- Link communities with the work carried out in the Environment Section and help and support them with work in their own community particularly tidy towns groups
- Give good practice advice, Advise of upcoming grants; workshops; Link with outside agencies and interest groups-
- Highlight national local and national environmental education and awareness campaigns
- Use to raise awareness around public consultations on environmental issues

Central Waste Management Facility and Recycling Centres

- A preliminary design for the CWMF landfill facility closure plan is complete. Wetland experts have provided input to this design, which aims to maximise habitat diversity. The 150 acre site is already home to a number of rare and endangered species which have slowly established themselves and increased in numbers in recent years.



Oil Pollution Management

- Clare County Council will host an oil pollution training exercise in Spanish Point planned for April 2017 as required by SEAPT (Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team) and the Oil Spill and HNS Contingency Plan.



A preparatory meeting was held with SEAPT in Foynes in December 2016 to set out generally the structure and organisation of the upcoming exercise. The meeting concluded with a visit to the SEAPT Oil Spill Response Equipment Warehouse located in Foynes Port. A follow up meeting was held in January between Environment, SEAPT Management and the SEAPT Oil Spill Response Contractor who will organise Incident Command during the event. The exercise will involve mainly Environment staff but will include other staff from other sections also.

Limerick Clare Energy Agency and Climate Change

- Limerick Clare Energy Agency continues to work towards reducing energy consumption and promoting initiatives towards achieving national energy efficiency and climate change targets.
- Environment Section has started to investigate the requirements of the Climate Change Adaptation Plans which are due to be developed nationally and locally.

FIRE & BUILDING CONTROL

Fire & Building Control Section (Main Activities)	Number (1st-31st Jan)	2016 Total
Number of Emergency Calls Attended	59	851
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Received	12	100
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Granted	10	103
Number of Fire Safety Certificates Invalidated	0	9
Number of Disability Access Certificates Received	5	67
Number of Disability Access Certificates Granted	4	49
Number of Commencement Notices Received	29	327
Number of Dangerous Structures/Places Complaints	1	25

With approximately 25% of domestic fires in Clare involving solid fuel stoves, Clare County Fire and Rescue Service urged householders to review the building regulations relating to heat producing appliances to ensure stoves and flues are installed correctly. The rising popularity of stoves in recent years has led to an increase in emergency callouts to stove-related domestic fires and incidences of carbon monoxide build-up in the home across County Clare.

Fires can occasionally be due to the poor installation of stoves and flues. Some of these fires have caused substantial damage to the surrounding building and consequently, have put lives at risk. Stoves burn at very high temperatures and therefore, the appliance and the flues need to be installed correctly. They should be clearly spaced from any timber or combustible materials. Insulated flues that pass through ceilings and walls need to be spaced and/or encased correctly.

Current guidance advises that when a new heating stove is installed, Carbon Monoxide detectors should be installed in the same room and within 5 metres of all bedroom doors. Where a system chimney is being used with a heat producing appliance and the flue passes within or over a habitable room, then a Carbon Monoxide alarm should be fitted in the room also. The Fire Service have experienced cases whereby the occupants of a home in Clare have been alerted to stove-related fires simply due to the presence of installed carbon monoxide alarms.

Ahead of installing a stove, the public is asked to review the appliance manufacturer's instructions and the current Building Regulations ("Heat Producing Appliances", 2014) on www.housing.gov.ie. Additional information regarding the proper installation of heating appliances and flues is available from www.bfcma.co.uk.

PUBLIC LIGHTING



Clare County Council has responsibility for the management and maintenance of more than 13,000 public lights in the county (CCC does not have responsibility for those pertaining to the Motorway Network). These lights are maintained under contract by Airtricity – in general, the contract is working well and in compliance in that the number of public lights which are out of order at any time doesn't exceed 2%.

Public Lighting is the single biggest energy consumption component of the Council's infrastructure and significant investment is required in this area if the current statutory target of achieving a carbon footprint reduction of 33% by 2020 is to materialise. Options to facilitate progress in this regard are being examined – both in local and National contexts. Over the past number of months, all counties have fed into the development of a National Inventory of Public Lights which will facilitate forward planning towards achievement of the 2020 objective.

Over the coming years, it is likely that there will be a significant conversion to LED lighting and the Council has implemented a number of schemes using this technology on

the basis that energy savings will result in them paying from themselves (with grant support) over a relatively short period of time. Further applications for funding to facilitate works of this nature will be submitted to TII/SEAI later this month.

For the benefit of Councillors, the following are the options available to facilitate reporting of public lighting faults:

- Internet: Direct reporting on our website – www.airtricitysolutions.com
- Phone: Airtricity Utility Solutions dedicated Call Centre – 1850 372 772
- Local Authority Identification – via Local Authority's website or Contact number